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PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHRL #0563/01 0791718

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 201718Z MAR 07

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7573

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE PRIORITY 0028

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000563

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/S STEVE HILL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2017

TAGS: PREL PHUM ZI GM

SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON ZIMBABWE: AT ODDS WITH SOME EU MEMBER STATES

REF: STATE 34009

Classified By: POL M/C John Bauman for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) PolOff delivered reftel demarche on March 20 to Dr. Rolf Krause, Head of Division for Pan-African and Southern African Affairs at the German MFA. Krause agreed that the situation in Zimbabwe is very concerning and deserves close attention by the international community. Krause said that the behavior of Mugabe is inexcusable, shows a profound lack of judgment, and indicates a loss of touch with reality on the part of the GOZ. He called Mugabe's actions in the past ten days "a tactical mistake of major dimensions." He added that the German ambassador was present for the GOZ "briefing" about recent events on March 19, and said that the Germans are not giving the GOZ's threats of PNG-ing Western diplomats very much credence.

¶2. (C) He noted that Germany, in its capacity as EU president, issued two statements within the past week condemning actions in Harare by the GOZ. He also said that some EU member states were unhappy that an EU Presidency message was issued rather than a joint statement by the EU. Krause said this was done because Germany felt it was in the interest of expediency to issue a Presidency statement, as garnering consensus for a statement by EU members would have been too lengthy. In spite of Germany's recent statements, however, Krause said that there is a risk in pushing for further high-profile statements against the GOZ. Saying that Germany does not want "to continue the escalation", he expressed the view that high-profile, prescriptive statements from Western governments will only incense Mugabe further and raise tensions rather than encourage change. On our request to call broadly for the release of those opposition members still in detention, Krause said this "will certainly not work, and will have the opposite effect - the Government of Zimbabwe is too dug in at this point."

¶3. (C) Among EU member states, Krause said there is disagreement on how to deal with Zimbabwe. Some members states (he did not specify which) are calling to extend the EU Common Position's travel ban to include the police officers involved in the recent beatings of MDC opposition leaders. Krause equated such a gesture with demanding high-profile statements, saying that an overly symbolic gesture would accomplish nothing. He also indicated that there is division between the member states on Zimbabwe's participation at the EU-AU summit, due to take place later this year in Lisbon. Some member states do not want Zimbabwe to be invited at all, which risks a withdrawal of some AU states' participation. Some will accept a scenario where Zimbabwe is invited but that Mugabe would "conveniently" be unable to attend, although given Mugabe's recent actions, such a quiet agreement cannot be counted on. Still other member states (notably Portugal) are so ideologically

committed to seeing the summit take place that they are willing to extend an invitation to Zimbabwe with no official restrictions. The current debate over how to respond to Mugabe's actions in the past week is tied to the longer-term debate over the summit agenda and participation. (Note: Krause shared this information in confidence, saying it was an ongoing sensitive point. Please protect source).

¶4. (C) When asked what measures the Germans viewed as most productive at this point, Krause said that they had already begun engaging member states of the South African Development Community (SADC) at a "low and discrete level" and that this was yielding agreement among some African states that, despite their commitment to African solidarity, Mugabe has handled things poorly and that Zimbabwe's economic conditions are causing a downslide for all members. Krause expressed the view that regional economic pressure on other African leaders will continue to exert the necessary pressure on them to speak out, as Presidents Mbeki, Kufuor, and Kikwete have done. Krause added, however, that the influence of the younger generation of African leaders will have limited impact on "the last of the Big Men and the freedom fighters in Africa".

¶5. (C) Krause said that Zimbabwe will be on the agenda of the EU Working Group on Africa, which will be chaired by German MFA Director for Africa, Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel, and take place in Brussels on March 21. He said that there is some discussion of hosting another Working Group meeting in April that deals specifically with Zimbabwe. Krause said that the UN Human Rights Council is the appropriate forum for handling Zimbabwe. Post delivered septel demarche (STATE 33357) on the prospect of raising Zimbabwe in the current session of the UNHRC to the MFA Office Director for

BERLIN 00000563 002 OF 002

International Human Rights, Peter Rothen, on March 20. Post will report the response to this demarche septel.

¶6. (C) PolOff spoke on March 20 with Richard Reinfeld, staffer for CDU parliamentarian Arnold Vaatz, about a planned press conference with Movement for Democratic Change opposition member, David Coltart, on March 21 in Berlin. According to Reinfeld, Coltart departed Harare for Europe about two weeks ago, and therefore was not affected by the recent crackdown on opposition members leaving the country. Reinfeld also said that Vaatz will propose that a special forum on Zimbabwe take place in parliament sometime late next week. Doing so, Reinfeld said, will raise the issue to higher levels in the press and public, and could have an impact on both the Chancellery's and MFA's response to the situation in Zimbabwe.

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